

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 SANTIA 02922 191805Z
ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
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S E C R E T SANTIAGO 2922

EXDIS

ARA FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, CU, UY, CI
SUBJECT: POSSIBILITY FOR POLITICAL PRISONER EXCHANGE

REF: HAVANA 981

1. ANY PROPOSAL FOR THE EXCHANGE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS
IN CUBA FOR THESE IN CHILE IS A NON-STARTER BECAUSE VIRUTALLY
ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS HERE HAVE EITHER BEEN RELEASED OR HAVE
GOOD PROSPECTS OF BEING RELEASED.

2. ALL PERSONS DETAINED WITHOUT TRIAL UNDER THE STATE OF
SIEGE HAVE BEEN RELEASED; THE VAST MAJORITY OF THOSE TRIED,
CONVICTED AND SERVING IN JAIL UNDER ARMS CONTROL LAWS HAVE
BEEN OR ARE ABOUT TO BE RELEASED (THE FIGURES HERE ARE NOT TOTALLY
CLEAR SINCE SOME ARE ABOUT TO COMPLETE THEIR SENTENCES AND
DON'T WANT RELEASE INTO EXILE, OTHERS HAVE HAD THEIR SENTENCES
COMMUTED TO EXILE BUT HAVE NO VISAS, AND SOME ARE BANISHED
INTERNALLY); AND ALL "BIG NAME" POLITICAL PRISONERS HAVE BEEN
RELEASED (CARLOS LAZO WAS THE LAST TO GO).

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3. OF THE REMAINING NATIONAL SECURITY PRISONERS IN TRIAL
STATUS, APPROXIMATELY 289 ARE FREE ON BAIL. THIS LEAVES ABOUT 96
CHARGED, IN JAIL, AND PENDING TRIAL. THE LOCAL ICEM REPRESENTATIVE
REPORTS HE HAS A DEAL WITH THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE WHEREBY THOSE
IN THIS NUMBER WHO ARE CONVICTED (NOT ALL WILL BE CONVICTED
PRESUMABLY) WILL BE RELEASED ONE WAY OR ANOTHER: IF THE PENALTY

IS THREE YEARS OR UNDER THEY WILL BE PARDONED, IF THE PENALTY IS OVER
THREE YEARS THEY WILL BE RELEASED INTO EXILE.

4. COMMENT. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTATNCES A CUBA/CHILE EXCHANGE
OFFERS NO ATTRACTION HERE SINCE THE VAST MAJORITY OF CHILEAN
POLITICAL PRISONERS HAVE BEEN RELEASED AND THE REMAINDER HAVE
GOOD PROSPECTS. ON THE CONTRARY, ANY PROPOSAL INVOLVING CUBA
MIGHT ENCOURAGE THE GOC TO HARDEN ITS STANCE AND NOT PERMIT CERTAIN
PRISONERS OUT UNTIL CUBA RELEASES SOMEBOTY.
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Message Attributes

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